

NFAC 2084-80

20 March 1980

Memorandum for DD/NFA

Subject: Senior Review Panel Comments on Interagency  
Intelligence Production  
(NFIB-14.2/5, 12 March 1980)

1. If the new set of definitions for interagency estimates is intended to reverse the recent trend away from NIEs and toward IIMs, it is unlikely to achieve that purpose.

2. The document raises or suggests six criteria on distinguishing NIEs from IIMs.

a. The importance of the subject is to be "highest" for NIEs and "high" for IIMs.

b. Relation to policy concerns is "direct" for NIEs and "indirect" for IIMs.

c. While NIEs are always forward looking, IIMs may or may not be so.

d. NIEs will display significant differences in estimative judgments while IIMs are not required to do so.

e. NIEs will always go before NFIB while IIMs will normally not.

f. The length of NIEs is to stay within defined limits. The length of IIMs is indefinite.

3. We feel that (a) and (b) do represent the most important criteria for distinguishing between NIEs and IIMs. Nevertheless, they are too fuzzy to stand in the

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way of a likely preference for IIMs. We believe that (c), (d), (e) and (f) will tend to perpetuate a disproportionate choice of IIMs over NIEs.

4. If a substantial shift toward NIEs is a management objective, two choices seem open:

a. To tolerate these ambiguities and approve the present document, and to rely on C/NIC for counteracting the probable preference for IIMs.

b. To restrict IIMs to the reaching of factual determinations without presenting estimates about the future.

5. However, if (a) is chosen, we recommend that additional distinguishing criteria, even if only suggestive, be incorporated in the definition of IIMs which would then read as follows: "Interagency Intelligence Memorandum. The IIM is an assessment of a foreign situation of high but only indirect policy concern to the US. The IIM often presents a considerable amount of evidential or methodological detail and may or may not present estimates about the future. It is the appropriate interagency vehicle on occasions when the paramount intelligence task is the reaching of factual determinations. It will display significant differences in analytical judgments if necessary. The IIM is issued by the DD/NFA, is coordinated at at least the working level in the Intelligence Community; on occasion it may be referred to NFIB and issued by the DCI."

6. As a final note, while we recognize the need for flexibility on the length of IIMs, we nevertheless believe that drafters should be instructed to keep them as short and concise as possible.

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cc: C/NIC

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